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FIU SOUTH ASIAN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP WITH PARISIAN INSTITUTE

Miami, FL, March 17, 2015—Florida International University has just signed a five-year memorandum of understanding with Le Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CEIAS) for a research collaboration on transnational migration of South Asian merchant communities in the Western Indian Ocean littoral entitled *Rāhē najāt (The path of salvation): Religious and Social Dynamics in the Trade Networks of the colonial and post-colonial Western Indic World*. Of particular interest is the transmission of religious culture and the reframing of social organization among Indic merchant communities of the western Indic world, such as the Khōjā peoples. Its focus is understanding how transnational movements and linkages transformed religious institutions, which developed in landed contexts and were later translated internationally, such as in East Africa, and also reframed social organizations of the groups under study.

This bilateral project is led by Professor Iqbal Akhtar at FIU and Directeur de recherché Michel Boivin. It will include a collaborative website, collection and digitization of Sindhi and Gujarati archival materials, biennial conferences, and coordinate publication of proceedings and the translation of primary Indic materials into English and French. The inaugural conference, supported in part by the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, will be held during the 2015 autumn term in Miami then biennially between Miami and Paris. This collaboration is part of the Khōjā Studies programme in the department of religious studies within the Muslim world studies initiative in the School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University.

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